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50

YEARS KEEPING
STATEN ISLAND GREEN!
1975-2025

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As autumn settles across Staten Island, our woods, wetlands, and meadows are alive with the colors that remind us of both resilience and change. This season, Protectors of Pine Oak Woods reflects on that dual truth, on the challenges we continue to face as stewards of Staten Island's environment, and on the lives of leaders whose passing marks a moment of deep remembrance for our community.

First, we must acknowledge the ongoing struggle against the Williams/Transco pipeline proposal. Once again, efforts have emerged to push forward a project that threatens our waters, our air, and the health of communities on Staten Island. Protectors has stood firm in opposition, citing the dangers of stirring toxic sediments—arsenic, PCBs, dioxin—that linger in the harbor from a legacy of industrial abuse. Approving this pipeline would undermine decades of work by state, federal, and community-led restoration efforts, and contradict New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. We remain committed to amplifying your voices, and we will continue to insist that Staten Island deserves cleaner water, safer air, and a healthier future for generations to come.

This fall also brings sorrow, as we mourn the passing of two figures who shaped Protectors and Staten Island's environmental movement. Our past president, Hillel Lofaso, dedicated his leadership, warmth, and humor to advancing our mission. His voice was steady, his vision grounded in a love for the borough's natural places, and his commitment to community unwavering. We also mark the passing of Professor Irving Robbins, a founding board member whose intellectual curiosity and deep respect for nature will be greatly missed. Together, their legacies remind us that Protectors is not only an organization but also a community bound by friendship, shared responsibility, and a love of the land.

As we move forward, let us honor their memory by carrying on the work they believed in so deeply: protecting Staten Island's green spaces, resisting projects that harm our environment, and creating opportunities for our neighbors, young and old, to find connection, purpose, and joy in nature.

I thank you for your ongoing support, your advocacy, and your participation in our hikes, cleanups, and educational programs. The change of seasons is always a reminder that time does not stand still, but with your help our mission continues, steadfast and strong.

— José Ramirez-Garofalo

Besides the autumn poets sing,
A few prosaic days
A little this side of the snow
And that side of the haze...

~Emily Dickinson

PROTECTOR'S MISSION

Protectors of Pine Oak Woods is committed to increasing the stewardship of Staten Island's existing parkland, Bluebelt corridors and nature preserves and to continuing the effort to preserve Staten Island's natural areas. Protectors advocates for protection and preservation by educating our members, the general public and elected officials at all levels of government through meetings, workshops, walks, articles, newsletters and sponsorship of environmental education.

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•

Protectors Co-founder and

President Emeritus

Richard Buegler (1928-2016)

..

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BULLETIN

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50

YEARS KEEPING
STATEN ISLAND GREEN
1975-2025

How did it all begin? Ellen Pratt has written "A History and a Memoir" chronicling the fifty-year history of Protectors of Pine Oak Woods with regards to the many parks and natural areas whose names are so familiar to us today.

The first installment, which appeared in the spring 2025 issue of the bulletin, spoke about the origins of Protectors and Clay Pit. In the second installment (below) Ellen gives an account of Blue Heron Park, Kingfisher Park, Wood Duck Pond, and St. Francis Woodlands. Look for more installments in future issues of the bulletin and on the blog at siprotectors.org.

PROTECTOR OF PINE OAK WOODS: 50 YEARS OF GREEN A HISTORY - PART II

On January 12, 1978, Protectors hosted an Endangered Natural Area's Symposium at what is now known as Staten Island Museum. Citizens who were interested in seeing parks created came to the Museum to show their slides and discuss their proposals.

BLUE HERON PARK

After considerable discussion it was decided that Protectors would support what later became known as Blue Heron Park. At the symposium Jack and Lois Baird showed slides that Jack had taken of Blue Heron Pond, Spring Pond and the adjacent wetlands which surrounded them. Howie Fischer, a well-known bird expert, also recommended protecting the Blue Heron Pond area on Poillon Avenue in Annadale. The Bairds had decided to try to make the area around their home into a wetlands park. They were prompted by plans to build 244 units of housing bordering Blue Heron Pond. They had been showing their slides to neighborhood groups and anyone who would listen. The Bairds led walks beginning in the early 1970s and interested Russ Nicholson, Ellen Overby, Maureen and Bob Hartje and many others in their plan. Rob Miraldi, a reporter, wrote an enticing story about Spring Pond, Blue Heron Pond and the Holdridge Avenue Woods. When Dick Buegler saw these mature woodlands he was impressed. The woods had been identified by NYC Planning as a "Designated Open Space" area. These 35 acres of mature woodlands are near Blue Heron Pond. The public became very interested when Dick Buegler and Steve Parisio led walks there.

George Pratt, who was knowledgeable about the workings of City Parks, took Ellen Pratt to meet with Jane Cleaver, Chief of Parklands for NYC Parks. She had surveyed all of South Richmond with a staffer from the City Planning Department and had identified areas worthy of preservation as "Designated Open Space." They were amazed when Jane Cleaver shared slides she had taken of Blue Heron Pond and surrounding areas. She was responsive to the requests of the community that a park be created in the Poillon Avenue wetlands.

...continued on next page.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH PPOW...

ORGANIZATION

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ppow@siprotectors.org

WEBSITE:

www.siprotectors.org

FACEBOOK:

Protectors of Pine Oak Woods

INSTAGRAM:

siprotectors

PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS: 50 YEARS OF GREEN A HISTORY - PART II



The committee to Save the Poillon Avenue Wetlands was renamed Friends of Blue Heron Park in 1981. Jack and Lois Baird joined the Board of Protectors and Jack photographed Protector's projects. Lois served as Recording Secretary for ten years.

At the suggestion of the Nature Conservancy, Friends wrote a 32-page report for the Parks Department about how the proposed Blue Heron Park would make an excellent environmental teaching site. Friends held a Blue Heron Country Fair in September of 1981. This event, organized by Ellen Pratt, drew 10,000 visitors. It was held on the streets surrounding IS7-Bernstein Intermediate School. It raised \$4,000 to help pay the insurance costs for creating a new park. Friends attracted many members. In 1983 the Parks Department hired Kathy Holler to direct environmental education classes. Lucille Cohen and Caroline Cutroneo were also hired. They held classes for elementary school students, even though there was no Nature Center building.

The park was 155 acres in 1984. Today it is 250+ acres, thanks to Jane Cleaver, Chief of Parklands and her staff. The Nature Center building was built and dedicated in 1998, thanks to Fred Cerullo III. The Urban Park Rangers began to run the educational programs. The park also serves as the headquarters for the SI Urban Park Rangers.

KINGFISHER PARK

A few months later Ellen received a call from Grace Pichler. Two women had come to her home on Islington Street in Great Kills with a petition to the City asking her to sign that she wanted the city to fill in the swamp down the street from her house. She was opposed. She was also alarmed that the swamp would actually get filled in. Ellen agreed to help. Down the street they found a small pond which was draining neighborhood streets. The pond drained into a much larger pond. This was a neighborhood resource where kids went swimming and fishing. The area hosted a large variety of wildlife, including Kingfishers. They definitely wanted to save the pond.

Ellen called Jack Baird, asking him to take photographs. Carlton Beil heard about the situation and decided to help. Carlton, like the Pied Piper, led neighbors on tours of the pond and adjacent woodland. At this time the City was continuing to install storm sewers to handle street drainage. The Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Al Appleton, insisted that natural drainage systems, which he called bluebelts, should be used instead. He felt the pond on Islington Street would make a good Bluebelt. It would drain street water from the surrounding blocks and direct it through the Brookfield wetland to Richmond Creek. Islington Pond would be a good first Bluebelt. Ellen also interested the Parks Department in creating a twenty-three acre neighborhood park. With community support and Carlton's walking tours the idea of a united park and Bluebelt developed. Ellen lobbied elected officials to request funding to preserve this natural area. Eventually Environmental Bond Act funds were obtained for the creation of Kingfisher Park. Protectors called it Kingfisher Park and the Parks Department called it Islington Pond Park. And so it was that storm sewers were installed in some parts of northern Great Kills and a Bluebelt was created to handle street overflow.

WOOD DUCK POND

Wood Duck Pond, a merging of parkland and Bluebelt, is a ten-acre oasis which Protectors was instrumental in saving. Neighbors used to call it "the Woods." Sandwiched in between Amboy Road and Oakdale Street, Armstrong Avenue and Seeley Lane, this tiny jewel was home to more Wood Ducks than any other wetland on Staten Island, according to staff of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC.) Wood Ducks, shy and colorful small ducks, nest in the trees surrounding Wood Duck Pond. They hide in the cattail reeds and skitter out of sight when humans approach. It is a great treat to see a wood duck because they are so reclusive and colorful. Wood Duck Pond drains ten blocks of street run off. A stream from the pond descends into a lower sledge pond.

Residents living nearby, including PPOW Board Member Linda Cohen, formed a group called Neighbors of Wood Duck Pond. They made efforts to save the pond and stream and woods due to their love of wildlife, trees and open space and their concern of flooding. This area was used for water retention, which was especially needed as many

...continued on next page.

PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS: 50 YEARS OF GREEN A HISTORY - PART II

residents had sump pumps in their basements. Residents enlisted Ellen Pratt's help, and she continuously informed residents and friends about the next steps they could take to help their cause. It was not an easy acquisition. All the lots there were privately owned. A well-known builder was hired by one of the owners and he produced blueprints for attached housing and a sewage pumping station right in the middle of the pond. Another owner also wanted to build. However, many folks from near and far worked to help preserve this area. There were publicized walks with PPOW board members Dominic Durso and Hillel LoFaso, as well as naturalists Carlton Beil and Ray Matarazzo. There were helpful write-ups from Audubon and Natural Resources Group of NYC Parks. Jack Baird took photos for an article in the Advance and Ed Burke from Borough President Molinari's office visited and publicly supported saving Wood Duck Pond (WDP). The work of board member Ken Lewis, who previously documented all the plants and animals in the area, helped designate Wood Duck Pond as a protected freshwater wetland. In Wood Duck Pond's sedge marsh, Ed Johnson, Curator of Science at Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences (SIAS) discovered the rare Eyed Brown butterfly. Ed referenced Arthur Shapiro's writings about the Eyed Brown, which Arthur considered "a likely candidate for extirpation on Staten Island."

Ellen wrote several articles and letters, including those describing the cost/benefit of using natural water drainage as opposed to building conventional storm water pipes. She also encouraged residents to write to elected officials. The SI Advance reporters were present for several of our many cleanups and they wrote about our preservation efforts. We had discussions with Dana Gumb, who directed the SI Bluebelt project for DEP.

A major success came in October 1993, when DEP commissioner Al Appleton came to Wood Duck Pond along with many others to announce that Wood Duck Pond and Woods would become part of the Bluebelt. Later on the city's Office of Management and Budget approved the project.

Some residents who wanted to build on their properties spoke at the Fresh Water Wetlands Appeals Board (FWAB) hearing in November 1994. Several residents came and spoke up for preserving the property. PPOW obtained intervenor status. In the summer of 1995, we were told that the FWAB voted 100 percent in our favor.

During the Universal Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process we appeared before Community Board 3 (CB3) and City Planning Commission (CPC) and received their approvals. A small community led by Linda Cohen, a board member of Protectors, now cares for this hidden treasure. The DEP has done restorative planting along a border of the pond. Treasures like the Jack-in-the-Pulpits, Mayflowers and Rattlesnake Orchids still survive as a remnant of a larger population. The system drains through storm sewers to the Sweet Brook wetland and then through the Brookfield wetland to Richmond Creek.

During her speech at Protector's semi-annual meeting in March 2015, Linda Cohen spoke these words: "I feel fortunate that Al Appleton was the commissioner of the DEP. He launched the idea of the Bluebelt and gave the go-ahead to Dana Gumb to do it. I'm glad that Dana is passionate about the Bluebelt and worked at including WDP and I was fortunate to have met Ellen. Ellen Pratt did much more work than any of us on saving WDP and she doesn't even live in my neighborhood. She never mentions this to me and she never boasts about it. I am one hundred percent sure that WDP would not have been saved without her."

ST. FRANCIS WOODLANDS

A key link to the central Greenbelt is the St. Francis Woodlands with trails running at the edge of and through the property, connecting Pouch Camp, High Rock Park and the Richmond County Country Club golf course. These twenty four acres of mature woodlands bring together the finest wooded areas of the greenbelt core. In 1985 it was announced that it was up for sale. This was a shock to residents of Todt Hill. It is thought that this tract was the oldest parcel of woodland left on Staten Island when all of the other woodlands were cut by the British for ship building. The forested canopy protected the meadows of the Richmond County golf course from erosion and flooding.

...continued on page 5.

PROTECTOR OF PINE OAK WOODS CALENDAR

FREE NATURE WALKS TO POND AND PARK FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Saturday, October 4, 9:30 - 11:30 am

OAKWOOD BEACH EXPLORATION

Join us for a close look at our urban beach and park. We'll hit the dunes and walk up to Cedar Grove Park.

Meet Jim at the bottom of Tarlton Avenue, off Mill Road, to begin the walk. For more information call Jim Scarcella at 718-873-4291.



Saturday, October 4, 2025, 1:00 - 3:00 pm
at the Biddle House - 70 Satterlee Street

NESE - WILLIAMS PIPELINE PRESS BRIEFING

Join residents, elected officials, city and state leaders. This pipeline isn't progress - it's a permanent threat to our safety. All are welcome.



Sunday, October 5, 2025, 1:00 - 2:30 pm

CLAY PIT PONDS PARK, WHERE IT ALL BEGAN!

Join us for a FREE event celebrating PPOW's 50th anniversary. Pat Salmon, Staten Island's historian, will share a rich history behind the establishment of CPPP and PPOW during its first twenty years. The presentation is followed by light refreshment and a short guided nature walk, led by Pat Salmon.

Meet at Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve, Nature Interpretive Center at 2351 Veterans Rd. West, SI, NY 10309.
Registration: Email: salmonf@aol.com or Text: 917-608-6437.



Monday, October 13, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

CLAY PIT'S FALL COLORS

Join Corrine McNally for a hike through Clay Pit Ponds Park to appreciate the Fall Colors Clay Pit has to offer. Trails can be rocky with roots so wear appropriate footwear and clothing to protect against ticks (lots of deer here.) Rain, light drizzle, or inclement weather cancels the hike.

Meet at Clay Pit Ponds State Park Office at 83 Nelson Avenue off Sharrott's Road (NOT at the Interpretive Center off Sharrott's Road.)

For more information you may contact your walk leader, Corrine McNally at Corrinemcn@aol.com.

Saturday, October 18, 10:00 am - 12 noon

FOREST RESTORATION WORKSHOP ON THE TODT HILL BLUE TRAIL

For our 350th workshop, and It's My Parks Day, we'll meet in the St. Francis Woodlands parking lot at the end of Helena Road (off Todt Hill Road, 1st street north of Whitlock Ave.), walk up the road to the Yellow Trail, then proceed southwest to the ruined foundations where we will cut and uproot alien Devil's Walking Stick, search out and cut woody, twining vines from the trees, and plant some native plants in the work area. After the work session we'll return to the parking lot by way of the St. Francis Woodlands boardwalk. Protectors will supply tools, gloves, and refreshments.

REGISTRATION: So that we know how many volunteers to expect, please register through the Eventbrite link on our website [siproteectors.org](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1416029114199?aff=oddtcreator).

October: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1416029114199?aff=oddtcreator>.

For more information call Brian Smith 917-842-6585 or Don Recklies 718-768-9036. (Service Credit is available.)



Friday, October 24, 7 pm - 8:30 pm

OWL PROWL AT BLUE HERON PARK

Explore the dark corners of Blue Heron Park with Cliff Hagen as he searches for our nocturnal neighbors. An owl prowls is a great way for families to enjoy the Halloween season. Participants often hear and see owls in their natural habitat. Flash photography is NOT allowed and flashlights are acceptable but discouraged because the light beams often spook the owls.

Meet Cliff at 7pm in front of the Nature Center of Blue Heron Park (222 Poillon Avenue) for the Owl Prowl.



Great Horned Owl at Clove Lakes Park. Photo by Domenico Macri.

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: While we strive for safety, the activities of Protectors of Pine Oak Woods (Protectors) have certain uncontrollable hazards which each participant undertakes and for which each participant is responsible. Neither the leader nor the substitute leader is responsible in any way whatsoever for any of these hazards. All participants assume the responsibility and risks of hiking and participating in Protectors events, and release Protectors, its leaders or substitute leaders, from any liability whatsoever for any loss, damage to personal property, or injury, however caused, of any kind, nature, and description.

PROTECTOR OF PINE OAK WOODS CALENDAR

FREE NATURE WALKS TO POND AND PARK FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Saturday, November 15, 10 am - 12 noon

FOREST RESTORATION WORKSHOP ON THE BUCK'S HOLLOW RED TRAIL

We'll meet in the Moses Mountain (now Paulo's Peak) parking lot at the intersection of Rockland and Manor Road (or park on Meisner Road opposite the Bluebelt dam close to that intersection), then cross Rockland to take the White Trail north to the large restoration area (formerly deer fenced) at the junction of the Red and Blue Trails where we will range the restored area cutting Wisteria and Oriental Bittersweet vines that threaten the new trees, and extracting alien Japanese Angelica saplings. If you don't have your own, Protectors will supply gloves and pruners (& refreshments.)

REGISTRATION: So that we know how many volunteers to expect, please register through the Eventbrite link on our website [siprotectors.org](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1716679728279?aff=oddtcreator).
November: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1716679728279?aff=oddtcreator>.

For more information call Brian Smith 917-842-6585 or Don Recklies 718-768-9036. (Service Credit is available.)



SAVE THE DATE

PROTECTOR'S SEMI-ANNUAL FALL MEMBERS MEETING

Sunday, November 16, 1 - 3 pm
at the Staten Island Museum, Building A
On the grounds of Snug Harbor Cultural Center
1000 Richmond Terrace

Join Protectors for our 50th Anniversary Fall semi-annual meeting, open to PPOW members and the general public. Free parking and museum entry.

Program
Current Projects
Guest Speakers
Membership Opportunity
Refreshments and Raffles

Contact Madeline Paladino at mpaladino@siprotectors.org for more information.



Common Terns at Great Kills Harbor. Photo by Ken Filmer.



Saturday, December 20, 10 am - 12 noon

FOREST RESTORATION WORKSHOP BELOW THE LATOURETTE BIKE PATH

We'll meet at the entrance to the bike path on the Old Mill Road (west off Richmond Hill Road) next to the old St. Andrews Church. We will go west on the unofficial trail between the bike path and the marsh cutting invasive vines that escaped us the last time we were there (this will be our 352nd monthly workshop.) If you don't have your own, Protectors will supply gloves, pruners & refreshments. After the work session we may take a short walk on nearby trails.

REGISTRATION: So that we know how many volunteers to expect, please register through the Eventbrite link on our website [siprotectors.org](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1416034099109?aff=oddtcreator).
December: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1416034099109?aff=oddtcreator>.

For more information call Brian Smith 917-842-6585 or Don Recklies 718-768-9036. (Service Credit is available.)



THURSDAY, JANUARY 1 2026
2 WALKS FOR DAY 1

FIRST DAY ENVIRONMENTAL WALK AT MT. LORETTO

10 - 11:30 AM

MEET AT THE Hylan Blvd. Parking Lot. There will be overflow parking available at the CYO parking lot across the boulevard.

In cooperation with NYCDEC, Protectors of Pine Oak Woods is hosting a First Day Environmental Walk at Mount Loretto. Greet the New Year with a leisurely winter walk along the gentle slopes of the grassland trails. Visit the wildlife platform overlooking the freshwater ponds as well as the Pavilion overlooking Raritan Bay. This one-mile loop offers good views of waterfowl, raptors, and sparrows. For more information contact José Ramirez-Garofalo at ppow@siprotectors.org.

35TH ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACH WALK

12 NOON - 2:00 PM

MEET AT BUFFALO ST. ENTRANCE TO GATEWAY GREAT KILLS PARK - OR MEET PARKING LOT F.

Join PPOW and NRPA to celebrate the New Year of 2026! The Early winter has unique features as the beach and dunes are reshaped each day. We may see herring gulls, waterfowl, fish and mammals. Bring a snack or beverage to share as we reminisce 2025 and celebrate 2026.

For more information call José Ramirez-Garofalo at [redacted] or Jim Scarcella at 718-873-4291.



PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS: 50 YEARS OF GREEN A HISTORY - PART II



The friars chose well. They built a two-acre lake to retain water overflow. But they no longer needed the dormitory buildings which were central to their teaching. Ellen Pratt remembers a conversation with Kathy Vorwick, Greenbelt advocate, persuading Ellen to save St. Francis by buying it with Environmental Bond Act funds. Ellen hired a film producer to show the majesty of the woodlands and lake. She went to Albany to show the film to DEC staff. They were impressed and the woodlands along Todt Hill Road and Helena Road were sold for ten million dollars to New York State DEC.

It took hundreds of letters and the letters and phone calls of every Staten Island state legislator to Governor Pataki, reminding him that New York City had not received Environmental Bond Act funds. Assemblyman Robert Straniere even brought the DEC Commissioner to see St. Francis Woodlands. The project was in the state budget in 1995 but then it was superseded in the budget in 1996. Then it was recommended again in 1997 and finally funded in 1997.

— Ellen O' Flaherty Pratt

"A History of Protectors of Pine Oak Woods; 50 Years of Green"
by Ellen O' Flaherty Pratt. Editorial Assistants: Lesley Andersen and Linda Cohen.

Look for further installments of this history in future newsletters.

Continue the Experience:
Would you like to see an
enhanced version of this article?
Visit our blog at siprotectors.org
for color photos and other links.



Clockwise from top left:
"Escargot", photo by Robert Mantz.
Female Cardinal at Great Kills Park, photo by Robert Mantz.
Fox in Brush at Oakwood Beach, photo by Ken Filmer.
Mushrooms on a Tree in Ingram Woods, photo by Louise Luger.



Perhaps you have noticed some of the wonderful photographs scattered throughout this newsletter. Each year we receive an abundance of photographs for the annual PPOW calendar. By placing some of these submissions in the bulletin we are able to showcase more of the amazing photographs contributed by our Staten Island nature photographers.

DRAGONFLY SURVEY OF THE NEW CREEK BLUEBELT IN 2024



Robert Brauman, Deputy Chief of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, enlisted Seth Wollney, of the Biology Department of the College of Staten Island, and myself to conduct dragonfly and damselfly surveys of wetlands that are part of the New York City Bluebelt system. The Bluebelt System is an ongoing project by New York City to control floodwaters that historically have plagued the low-lying sections of our borough. It is a system of catching basins and dams that collect and absorb the off flow of storms and floods and slowly release these waters in a controlled manner. An added benefit these projects provide is that they create wetland habitats that are more conducive to species diversity than the area had provided prior to the construction of the catch basin and dam systems. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection initiated a program to document the dragonfly and damselfly fauna at Bluebelt sites as part of a larger initiative to document the biology of these sites.

In 2024, I conducted a survey of the New Creek Bluebelt System which is located in the Dongan Hills and South Beach sections of Staten Island (Mr. Wollney surveyed Bluebelt sites in Conference House Park and Blue Heron Park). Species were identified and their numbers were tallied.

The area I surveyed in 2024 included the section of New Creek above Hylan Boulevard referred to as Last Chance Pond as well as New Creek below Hylan Boulevard to Olympia Boulevard in Midland Beach. From 09 April 2024 to 31 October 2024 I made 135 observations from selected New Creek observation points. My findings are as follows.

DRAGONFLIES- Easter Amberwing (*Perithemis tenera*) = 96; Common Whitetail (*Plathemis/ Libellula lydia*) = 79; Common Green Darner (*Anax junius*) = 57; Blue Dasher (*Pachydiplax longipennis*) = 43; Black Saddlebags (*Tamea lacerata*) = 25; Eastern Pondhawk (*Erythemis simplicicollis*) = 15; Carolina Saddlebags (*Tamea carolina*) = 4; Needham's Skimmer (*Libellula needhami*) = 3 [Note: this species is rare in New York State]; Painted Skimmer (*Libellula semifasciata*) = 3; Slatty Skimmer (*Libellula incesta*) = 2; Wandering Glider (*Pantala flavescens*) = 2; Twelve-spotted Skimmer = 1. These were all sight observations. Observed but unable to be positively identified = 115 dragonflies. **DAMSELFLIES-** Records of damselflies = 41 of which only 2 Familiar Bluets (*Enallagma civile*) were positively identified by microscopic examination.

Prior to the construction of the Bluebelt at New Creek this area was by and large a *Phragmites australis* monoculture where this invasive grass was the dominant plant of this ecosystem. Plant monocultures usually have the overall effect of limiting the species diversity of what animals, including insects such as dragonflies and damselflies, can inhabit and reproduce in such an environment. The Bluebelt project at New Creek created ponds and slowly moving streams at the site. Additionally, the *Phragmites australis* was removed and native plants suitable to such a habitat were planted. This 2024 survey indicates that the dragonfly species diversity and overall dragonfly numbers were low. However, this will probably change over time as different species colonize the site. The New Creek Bluebelt offers habitat suitable to an increase of dragonfly diversity and overall numbers in the future. The 2024 New Creek Dragonfly and Damselfly Survey will serve as a benchmark for the future study of this wetland system.

— Paul T. Lederer

MEMBERSHIP

MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Autumn Greetings,

Don't "fall" behind in your membership dues.*
During our 50th anniversary year it is more important
than ever to give your support as a Protector of the
oldest environmental organization in Staten island.

Receive these benefits:

- ◆ Protectors' exclusive 2026 nature calendar
mailed to you.
- ◆ Nature walks, workshops, and social gatherings
during the year.
- ◆ Seasonal Protectors' bulletins.
- ◆ Semi-annual member meetings - the next one
is Sunday, November 16.
- ◆ First-hand reports on work done to protect
Staten Island's natural wonders.
- ◆ Your voice heard, whether in support of, or in
protest of the projects and proposals impacting
our fragile open spaces.

It's easy to become a new Protector and easier to stay a
Protector. Please use the membership form to select
your new or renewal category and any additional
donation you want to make. Send a check by mail or
simply use your credit card or PayPal on the
Protectors website, www.siprotectors.org.

*Not sure of your membership status? Email
membership@siprotectors.org. We look forward to
hearing from you!

Madeline Paladino



"Redheads" at Wolfe's Pond Park. Photo by Theadora Mastoros.

PROTECTOR'S OF PINE OAK WOODS MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Please enroll me as a member in the following category:

_____ NEW _____ RENEWAL _____ DATE

- _____ \$15.00.....Student
- _____ \$25.00.....Senior (62 and older)
- _____ \$30.00.....Individual
- _____ \$40.00 Family/Household
- _____ \$75.00 Contributor
- _____ \$150.00.....Supporter
- _____ \$250.....Benefactor
- _____ \$500 Patron
- _____ \$3000.....Life
- _____ \$5000 Corporate/Organization

Here is my additional donation of \$_____ for:

\$_____ General donation

\$_____ SI Natural Areas Defense Fund

\$_____ DEC Teen Camp Scholarship Fund

\$_____ In honor of _____

Can your employer offer Matching Grants?

Enclosed is a tax deductible check for \$_____
made out to Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, Inc.
To join/renew/donate by credit card or PayPal
visit siprotectors.org/donate.

**ALREADY A MEMBER? PLEASE USE THIS FORM TO
GIVE GENEROUSLY TO FURTHER OUR MISSION.**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL: _____

Contact me, I want to volunteer my help: _____

Mail to: Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, Inc.,
P.O. Box 140747, Staten Island, NY 10314.

Questions? Email membership@siprotectors.org.



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SAVE THE DATE
PROTECTOR'S SEMI-ANNUAL
FALL MEMBERS MEETING

Sunday, November 16, 1 - 3 pm
at the Staten Island Museum, Building A
On the grounds of Snug Harbor Cultural Center
1000 Richmond Terrace

Join Protectors for our 50th Anniversary Fall semi-annual meeting,
open to PPOW members and the general public.
Free parking and museum entry.

Program

Current Projects
Guest Speakers
Membership Opportunity
Refreshments and Raffles

Contact Madeline Paladino at mpaladino@siprotectors.org for more information.